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SUSPICION, OR THE LAST APPLE.

The parlour bell rang, and Mrs Bridget hurried up stairs at an unusual rate, for she judged, by the hasty and peculiar tinkle, that she was summoned upon no ordinary occasion. Bridget had lived with Mrs Simpson as maid, or rather as confidant and humble companion, for nearly twenty years. The term humble companion may perhaps have been rather misapplied, as it generally happened that Bridget's opinion took the lead, though the mistress was not always aware of it. It may, however, be justly concluded that, during such a lapse of time, Bridget had become so well acquainted with the temper and habits of the lady, as to understand to a sort of hair's-breadth nicety her mistress's humour by the slightest circumstance. For instance, when Mrs Simpson returned home from an evening party, the quick-sighted Bridget could tell in one moment, by the sound of her footstep, or even, she declared, by the hang of her shawl, whether she had been gratified or otherwise. On the present occasion, therefore, the ringing of the bell indicated something remarkable; and in haste and perturbation Bridget made her appearance to inquire the cause.

'Bridget,' said her mistress in a quiet tone, which did not altogether accord with the hasty summons, nor yet with the agitated looks which accompanied it—'Bridget, come here,' repeated the old lady, who was standing near the window. Bridget obeyed, and looking in the direction to which her mistress pointed, saw, and at once comprehended, why she had been summoned.

'Gracious goodness!' exclaimed Bridget in almost a scream; 'the last apple gone!'

'It is indeed,' replied Mrs Simpson; 'but how is it gone, that's the question?'

'The beautiful apple!' cried Bridget; 'the finest on the tree; indeed the only one that could be said to come to perfection. It was but yesterday morning that I stood admiring it. One side was so sweetly streaked with red, and I said to myself that apple must certainly be ripe, for it had got that fine gold-coloured tinge all over it. Indeed, ma'am, if you recollect, I wished you to gather it some days ago. But, as you say, which way could it have gone? Certainly by no fair means.'

'I think not,' replied Mrs Simpson; 'the weather is so mild and still, that it can hardly have fallen of itself.'

'That I am positive it has not,' cried Bridget. 'If the high wind of last Monday did not bring it down, it could not have dropped since.'

'However,' said the old lady, 'for my own satisfaction, we will just look round the garden.'

'As you please, ma'am, though I feel convinced it will be to no purpose.'

Mrs Simpson and her confidant accordingly set out on the important search; the mistress, with her spectacles on, slowly and carefully peering on either side, and despairingly shaking her head, as every step she took showed the search was useless. Bridget took a less accurate survey as she kicked the fallen leaves about, so thoroughly assured did she feel that the apple had been spirited away. Having thus traversed the whole round of the garden, it was a settled point that the apple was gone to all intents and purposes, and most pathetically did the lady lament that she had not gathered it before; nor did Bridget, in the midst of her condolence on the occasion, fail to remind her mistress that it was about the hundredth time that she had had good reason to repent not taking her (Bridget's) advice. Indeed, though the servant's loss in the apple was equa to that of her mistress, as the favourite fruit was always shared with the favourite maid, yet she had infinitely more of consolation in the business; for there certainly was some satisfaction in the idea of her mistress being punished for not attending to her counsel: and next, having declared her assurance that the apple had gone by unfair means, she was, in truth, not sorry it could not be found.

'Well, ma'am,' said she, 'you see I was right; indeed, from the first moment that it was missed, I felt certain that the apple had been stolen; and now, ma'am, all that remains is, that you will catch your death with cold if we stay out any longer. I can positively affirm that we have sought over every inch of ground; and I once more repeat, that some one must have taken the apple.'

'I am quite of your opinion,' replied the lady; 'and, as you say, there is no good in seeking any further.'

Mistress and maid then directed their steps towards the house, re-entered the parlour, shut the door, and seated themselves by the fire, in order to discuss the subject. The matter of extreme importance now was to ascertain the offender.

'Who can have taken it?' cried Mrs Simpson.

'Why, ma'am,' replied Bridget, 'the truth is, I have but little scruple in saying I firmly believe that Tom Randal, the butcher's boy, is the thief; for, besides that he is one of the most audacious lads I ever knew, he has always cast such a keen look towards that apple-tree, that I often thought it would be next to a miracle if the fruit escaped him. There is something insolent in Tom Randal's whistle. I am positive he is daring enough for anything; and it will only surprise me if that boy does not come to be hanged.'

'I hope not,' exclaimed the charitable mistress. 'Even if he has taken the apple, it is hard to prophesy that he will come to the end you mention. Besides, we cannot speak positively; for though Tom may be saucy at times——'

'May be!' interrupted Bridget; 'indeed, ma'am,

there's no "may" in the matter. He is at all times the most insolent chap that I ever spoke to. It was only yesterday morning that, because I made him go back for the suet, which he had forgotten, he went off muttering. I am sure that I would not for the world wrongfully accuse any one; but I only wish I was as sure of some other things, as I am sure that Randal stole the apple.'

'It may be so,' replied Mrs Simpson; 'but now, Bridget, I will tell you whom I suspect as at least as likely to have taken the apple as the butcher's boy: why, no other person than Jenny Price, the washerwoman's niece. The girl is civil and well-behaved, but yet to me she appears artful.'

Bridget, though generally pretty positive, changed her opinion, and in an instant transferred the guilt from Tom Randal to Jenny Price. She gave her mistress a nod, as much as to say, 'You have hit it!'

'It never struck me before,' cried she; 'but indeed, ma'am, you are right. Jenny is as artful a little puss as ever breathed. I shall never forget, when they had scorched my best lace frill, how cunningly the young gipsy put it underneath the other things, supposing that I should not find it out. I could suspect that girl of any trick. And let me see—she was here late yesterday afternoon, and was dawdling about below for some time; for, after I thought she was gone, to my surprise I saw my young madam creeping out at the gate. Now I say, what business had she to stop an instant after she had been paid? And what could she be doing? But I'll go to her aunt this blessed day, and if I don't make the little demure wretch confess what she has done, my name is not——'

'Stop, Bridget,' exclaimed the old lady; 'we must not be in too great a hurry. Though I mentioned Jenny Price, yet where so many people have been in and out, she is only one among others; besides, I have had another thought. Did not the cheesemonger's lad come here this morning? How can we be certain that he did not take the apple?'

Bridget paused, and looked much concerned. 'I have never seen anything,' said she, 'which could give me reason to suspect him of such a thing. Indeed he seems quite a respectable sort of lad, remarkably well-behaved, and never fails to pull off his hat whenever he meets me. I should be sorry to think any harm of him.'

The circumstance of his politeness very much inclined Mrs Bridget in his favour, especially as she did not in general meet with much civility, being one of those acting managers who take upon themselves infinitely more than their superiors. Mrs Bridget had a notion that the sure way to make herself of consequence, was to find fault and give as much trouble as she possibly could. Consequently, while the shopkeepers, for the sake of profit, bore as patiently as they could with the fault-finding housekeeper, their assistants and she were generally at warfare. The politeness of the cheesemonger's boy was valued accordingly, and it was with some degree of reluctance that she allowed the possibility of his being the culprit. But the longer she considered the matter, the more did circumstances appear against him.

'I am sorry for it,' cried Bridget; 'but, to be sure, boys will be boys; and, upon further consideration, I am sadly afraid it was poor William. He was here very early this morning, ma'am—full two hours before you were up; and as he came along the garden with a basket in his hand, he stopped for a moment close to the apple-tree, and I certainly observed one of the branches shake a little; but I thought nothing about it at the time. So Hannah took in the things, and the lad was going away again, when I recollected that we wanted another lump of butter; and wishing it to be from the same dairy as the last, which was remarkably good, and thinking he would be more likely to attend to my orders than to Hannah's, I ran down stairs and called after him; and, to be sure, I never shall forget how frightened and confused the lad looked. As sure as I sit here, ma'am, he has taken the apple; else why should he have seemed so alarmed? I did not speak angrily; on the contrary, I said, "William, you are a good boy for bringing the eggs in time for our breakfast." So, as I said before, what should make him appear so confused if he had not done something wrong?'

'Well, Bridget,' exclaimed the mistress, 'from all you have said, I certainly think there is little doubt that it was the cheesemonger's lad who took the apple; and really, for a decent well-behaved boy, as you say he is, it was a daring action.'

Bridget made no reply. Though she had given her full evidence against her favourite, yet she seemed pondering over something in her mind.

'After all, as you say, ma'am, it is not right to accuse any one, unless we are quite sure; and I have just recollected another person that neither of us thought of—old Janet Gray. I would not swear that she did not take the apple.'

'Nay, Bridget,' interrupted the lady, 'now your suspicions go too far. I cannot for an instant believe that poor old Janet would do such a thing. You know she only comes now and then for a little skimmed milk or broken victuals, and she has not been here for several days; besides which, I believe her to be as honest a creature as ever lived. What can induce you to suspect the poor old soul?'

'Why, ma'am, you shall hear,' replied Bridget, who had quietly heard her mistress out, aware that she could presently shake her mistress's extreme confidence in Janet's honesty. 'I will just give you my reasons for thinking as I do of the old woman. In the first place, begging your pardon, ma'am, Janet was here no longer ago than yesterday afternoon, and Hannah, by my orders, sent her home with a basketful of different things, even a cold veal cutlet, which I could have eaten myself, for I am very fond of cold veal cutlets; but I said, "Hannah, you may as well give it to the poor old woman;" and this was the return the ungrateful creature made—to carry off our last apple.'

'Well—but,' again remonstrated Mrs Simpson——

'You shall hear, ma'am,' continued Bridget. 'There was a time when I felt a regard for Janet Gray, knowing that she had gone through much trouble, and had seen better days; and there was a time when I thought her as honest as the day, and would have trusted her with untold gold. Indeed so I would now, sooner than with either fruit or cakes; for I do not believe that, upon her own account, she would take a pin: but then Janet has got a grandchild, and, ma'am, you would not credit, nor could anybody believe, the way in which she pampers that brat, and for its sake I firmly think she would beg, borrow, or steal. I remember, times and oft, she has looked at the apple-tree, and sighed; but I thought nothing about it, never supposing that people who wanted bread could long for apples. But the other day I saw old Janet purchasing some coals, and the coals happening to be dearer than she expected, she got

no change out of her sixpence; and so, not having a halfpenny left, she positively intreated the people of the shop, almost with tears in her eyes, to give her an apple or a cake to take home to her dear little Mary.'

'Poor soul!' exclaimed Mrs Simpson in a tone of compassion; 'I cannot think the worse of her for being so fond of her grandchild; nor do I still see, from such a circumstance, that you have any reason to believe that she would steal.'

'Well, ma'am,' replied Bridget, 'perhaps I might not have thought so much about it, but for an artful trick which she served me the other day. Janet had come as usual for her skimmed milk, and hearing her cough very badly, I gave her a large lump of sugar-candy, for which she thanked me most kindly; but—would you believe it, ma'am?—instead of putting it into her mouth, she popped it into her pocket; and I should never have found her out, but that, in her hurry, she slipped it through her pocket-hole, and it fell to the ground. The old woman looked foolish enough, you may be sure, declaring, however, that her cough was nothing, but that, if I pleased, she would take the sugar-candy home to her dear little girl. I own I felt provoked, for I looked upon it as neither more nor less than a cheatery; however, I said nothing; but from that hour I felt convinced that old Janet would go any lengths for the sake of pampering her grandchild.'

'Well, poor creature,' said Mrs Simpson; 'one cannot wonder that she should be so fond of the orphan child of her only son, who was killed in the wars: it is very natural that she should make a pet of it.'

'Very true, ma'am, but there is reason in all things;' and Mrs Bridget argued so forcibly upon the subject, and brought so many instances of the old woman's stratagems to procure niceties for the child, that at length Mrs Simpson felt convinced that she might have been the culprit. There was now a long pause: the thoughts of both mistress and maid were absorbed in the same subject, though in a different way; Mrs Simpson regretting that poor Janet should have forfeited her integrity, while Bridget was casting about in her mind how she should be able to bring the guilt home to the delinquent; that is to say, in what manner she should make the old woman confess the fact.

'I shall be truly sorry,' cried Mrs Simpson, 'if poor Janet has done such a thing.'

'Oh, ma'am!' cried Bridget, 'the more I think of it, the less doubt I have upon the subject.'

The old lady was again silent; for she was still considering if there were no other possible way in which the apple might have gone. At length she said, 'Bridget, did not Mrs Robinson send her maid here yesterday afternoon to inquire after my health? Now, the truth is, I do not like the young woman; and though I would not mention such a circumstance, out of delicacy to my friend, yet I do not think it impossible but that she might take the apple.'

'I never once thought of her,' cried Bridget; 'but, in my opinion, she is about the most likely of all we have guessed at to be the one who has taken the apple; for I never saw that girl, in doors or out of doors, but she was munching something. She seems to be one of those greedy people who are continually eating—her pockets are always filled with nuts, apples, or gingerbread. Now, it being almost dusk when she came yesterday, she might not be aware that the apple she saw was the last on the tree, and that we should immediately miss it. Unluckily, it hung so low, that no one could pass without perceiving it, which was the reason, ma'am, that I wished you to gather it before. So, as I say, you may depend upon it the greedy creature could not refrain from plucking it, and a most barefaced piece of impudence it was; and though it does not become me to differ from you in opinion, ma'am, yet I do think you are over-scrupulous in not liking to mention the circumstance; for a hussy who could not deliver a message without stealing something by the way, ought to be exposed. Indeed it is but common justice that her mistress should be made acquainted with the character she has to deal with; for the more I consider the matter, the more convinced I feel that the girl is quite equal to such an act, and very little scruple should I have in telling her so.'

Which words were scarcely out of Bridget's mouth, ere the subject of them made her appearance. The lady and her confidant exchanged looks, as a well-known saying recurred to the mind of each.

Susan curtsied: she had now brought an invitation from her mistress, and also a request for a book that she had forgotten to ask for the evening before; and while Mrs Simpson went herself to bring the volume, Bridget was considering in what way she should attack Susan upon the subject of the apple; for, notwithstanding her declaration that she should like to tell her of it, she found it rather an awkward affair to directly accuse the young woman of being a thief. But she was spared further deliberation by Susan's leading at once to the subject, exclaiming, as she cast her eyes towards the window, 'Why, gracious me! Mrs Bridget, all your beautiful apples are gone!'

'Yes,' replied Bridget, 'they are *indeed*;' laying a peculiar emphasis on the last word. 'Every one,' continued she; 'and the last apple went in a very remarkable manner;' and Bridget fixed her eyes on the young woman. Susan bore the scrutiny without flinching; but whether from innocence or consummate effrontery, was hard to determine. The housekeeper concluded the latter; but the girl's assurance, though it appeared to add to her guilt, rendered it the more intimidating and difficult to bring her to a confession; when Bridget bethought her of putting a home question, which she imagined must let in some light upon the affair.

'Pray, Susan,' said she, 'did you ever taste our apples?'

'No, ma'am,' replied Susan, and she certainly did blush as she spoke. At this critical moment, however, Mrs Simpson re-entered the room with the book, with which, and compliments and inquiries after the lady's health, Susan was despatched on her return. To have lost such an opportunity was not easily got over by Mrs Bridget.

'Never was anything half so unlucky, ma'am, as your coming in at the instant you did. I was just getting at the truth in the cleverest way imaginable I merely said, quite coolly, "Pray, Susan, did you ever taste our apples?" and I only wish, ma'am, that you had seen her countenance when I put the question. You would then feel as convinced as I do that she was the person who took the apple; and if I had not brought her to a confession, the apple is not gone—that's all.'

'I am not sorry, however,' replied Mrs Simpson, 'that matters did not go so far. It would have been very awkward to have accused the young woman of such a thing without proof; and you know, Bridget, that circumstances have appeared very strong against every person whom we have thought of, so that we cannot say positively who it was; and I really think, after all, we must let the matter drop.'

Now according to law, persons suspected are considered innocent till their guilt is proved; but Bridget's zeal outstripped her charity, and, far from being puzzled by a circumstance which would have perplexed most people, namely, that among all those accused, only one could have taken the apple, she rather concluded them all guilty till the real culprit was found; and, accordingly, felt very indignant at hearing her mistress talk of letting the matter drop, which, however, in her own mind, she resolved it should not do—not one of the suspected should entirely escape a more rigid scrutiny. Some she resolved openly to accuse, while to others she planned to throw out such broad hints as could not fail to make them understand her meaning; and still, as she canvassed the affair in her imagination, more were added to her list of suspected persons. A family living next door were now brought in: to be sure they were kind neighbours, and of the highest

respectability; but then they had a family of children, and the children had got visitors, and these visitors were schoolboys, who, it is well known, are equal to any pranks in the way of fruit-stealing. This family, therefore, Bridget determined should know a little of her mind upon the subject: but this she kept to herself, aware that her lady would not be willing to risk anything that would be likely to make a difference between herself and her neighbours; so, for the present, the subject was suffered to rest. Except that when Bridget read the newspaper to her lady, she did not fail, in commenting upon the crimes which filled its pages, to dilate upon the mischief ensuing from suffering small offences to go unpunished. The lady bore all these half-reproaches patiently. The circumstance which had occurred still grated on her mind; but the matter had been discussed so warmly, as to threaten unpleasant consequences, arising from some difference of opinion between the lady and her confidential servant. Thus the subject, though occupying the mind of both, was, for the remainder of the day, not mentioned by either.

On the following morning, however, Bridget, having been out on some particular business, entered the parlour with a hasty step, and a countenance glowing with triumph and satisfaction, and began with, 'Well, ma'am, thanks to stirring pretty briskly in the matter, I have at last found out the real thief; ay, ay, let me alone, I generally know how to go to work in such affairs; and now, ma'am, I hope in future you will take what I say a little into consideration. For I repeat, that it is a shocking thing, and a public injury, to suffer thieves to escape with impunity, though it may be only an apple they have stolen.'

'But, Bridget,' said the lady——

Bridget's impatience bore down all interruption. 'I declare, ma'am,' exclaimed she, 'it is enough to try the temper of a saint to hear you with your buts and ifs, when I say that I have got positive proof of the person who took the apple, though I have not yet seen or brought him to confession.'

'And where,' said Mrs Simpson, 'did you or could you get your positive proofs?'

'You shall hear, ma'am,' replied Bridget, unpinning her shawl, and seating herself in regular, comfortable form to begin her story—'you shall——'

'And you shall see, Bridget,' said Mrs Simpson, at the same time taking up the identical apple, the subject of so much debate, suspicion, and false accusation, and which, though it had lain on the table before her eyes, Bridget had been too much occupied to observe.

It is not too much to say that the most terrific apparition would hardly have had a greater effect on Mrs Bridget, who was, to use a vulgar but appropriate expression, completely 'dumbfounded.' When she had somewhat recovered the first shock, for we cannot give it any other term, she endeavoured to doubt the fact, alleging it to be an actual impossibility; but the apple bore a mark, a very remarkable one—a little dint, with a bird-peck on the side of it—which had been too often noticed by both mistress and maid to allow of any doubt. Indeed it seemed like one of those lucky marks which, time out of mind, have served to identify lost children.

In answer to Bridget's looks of wondering curiosity, the old lady went on to relate the circumstance of finding the apple, which was simply this. In taking her customary walk round the garden, by that sort of natural disposition which frequently prompts one to seek, even when all hopes of finding are over, Mrs Simpson, on reaching the apple-tree, cast a look towards the bereaved branch, and from thence to the ground, where, immediately underneath, but nearly concealed by the box-border beneath which it lay, was the lost apple. 'How it happened,' said Mrs Simpson, 'that we missed finding it yesterday, is more than I can imagine; but so it was.'

Bridget sighed, wondered, and once more examined the apple, to see if she could find a flaw in the evidence; but it was not to be done: the only flaw was in the apple, which had been most cruelly tunnelled and honeycombed by the insects.

'Ah, Bridget,' said the old lady, 'how many innocent people have we accused, and never once suspected the real depredators—the slugs and snails! I hope, for the future, we shall know better: indeed it is a true saying, that "the loser is often the greatest sinner." I am very glad, however, that we went no further than talking the matter over between ourselves, as it might otherwise have led to unpleasant consequences.'

Bridget's conscience in this respect was not quite so clear as that of her mistress; but she was thoroughly humbled, and we trust she received a *beneficial lesson*.

ANIMAL LANGUAGE.

Language—as far as the communication of ideas by certain modes of contact, by gesture, or by sounds, can be called by that name—seems to be possessed in common by all living creatures. The first or simplest form in which this faculty is manifested among animals, is that of contact—a species of intercommunication beautifully illustrated by the habits of such insects as the ant. 'If you scatter,' say the authors of the *Introduction to Entomology*, 'the ruins of an ant's nest in your apartment, you will be furnished with a proof of their language. The ants will take a thousand different paths, each going by itself, to increase the chance of discovery; they will meet and cross each other in all directions, and perhaps will wander long before they can find a spot convenient for their reunion. No sooner does any one discover a little chink in the floor, through which it can pass below, than it returns to its companions, and, by means of certain motions of its antennæ, makes some of them comprehend what route they are to pursue to find it, sometimes even accompanying them to the spot; these, in their turn, become the guides of others, till all know which way to direct their steps.' The mode of communication employed by bees, beetles, and other insects, is much of the same nature, being almost entirely confined to contact, and rarely or ever partaking of gesticulation, which may be considered as the next form of language in the ascending scale.

In expressing their wants, feelings, and passions, almost all the higher animals make use of gesticulation. The dog speaks with his eye and ear as significantly as he does by his voice; the wagging of his tail is quite as expressive as the shake of a human hand; and no pantomime could better illustrate conscious error, shame, or disgrace, than his hanging ears, downcast look, and tail depressed, as he slinks away under rebuke. The dog, indeed, is an admirable physiognomist, whether actively or passively considered. If you can read craving, fear, or anger in his countenance, so he will kindness or surliness in yours, just as readily as he can interpret the physiognomy of one of his own species. Observe that huge mastiff gnawing a bone on the other side of the street, and see how the Newfoundland that is coming up on this side deports himself. First, he stands stock-still; not a muscle of his frame is moved: the mastiff takes no notice of him. Next, he advances a few steps, looks intently, wags his tail once or twice; still not a glance from the mastiff, which is evidently striving not to observe him. On the Newfoundland goes, with an indifferent amble, keeping as closely to this side as he can, and thinks no more of the mastiff. Had the latter, however, lifted his head from the bone, had he exchanged one glance of recognition, had he brushed his tail even once along the pavement, the Newfoundland would have gone gambolling up to him, even though the two might have had a tussle about the bone in the long-run. Here, then, is an example of strict physiognomy or pantomime, quite as well understood between animals as the most ardently-expressed sounds. Again, mark that couple of terriers, bound on a secret rabbiting excursion to yonder hill-side. Two minutes

ago, that shaggy native of Skye was dozing on his haunches, as little dreaming of a rabbit-hunt as of a journey to the antipodes. But his little pepper-and-mustard friend awoke him from his reverie, and pricking up his ears, gambolled significantly around him. Next he scampered onwards for a dozen of yards or so, looked anxiously back, again scampered forward, looked back, whined, and returned. Then he set out, scenting the ground as if he had made some important discovery, stopped suddenly, made a short detour, tracking some imaginary scent as eagerly as if a treasure of venison lay beneath his nose. This at length rouses his friend of Skye, and away they trot as slyly to the hill as any couple of poachers. Now our pepper-and-mustard hero is beating the whin-bushes, while his comrade stands outside the cover, ready to pounce on the first rabbit that makes its appearance. Not a whine, not a yelp is heard—the whole is conducted by signs as significant and as well understood as the most ingenious system of marine signalising.

Independent of the humble kind of expression which gesticulation implies, many of the higher animals are possessed of vocal language, by which they can give the most intelligible utterance to their feelings of delight, pain, fear, alarm, recognition, affection, and the like. Nor does this language differ in aught but degree from that which we ourselves enjoy. Our organs may be capable of a greater variety of tones and modulations; and yet in some cases this is more than questionable: all that can be said is, that the human organisation is capable of more perfect articulation, and this articulation is a thing of art, imitation, and experience, depending upon the higher degree of intelligence with which the Creator has endowed us. The brute creation express their feelings and passions by certain sounds, which are intelligible not only to those of their own species, but in a great degree to all other animals. Man, in his natural state, does little or nothing more. It is civilisation—the memory of many experiences, aided by his higher mental qualities—which gives him his spoken language; each new object receiving a name founded on association with previously-known objects, and each conception receiving expression by association with ideas formerly entertained. Nothing of this kind takes place among animals; their limited endowments do not permit of it, as the range of their existence does not require it. Their language may be considered as stationary in a natural state, though capable of some curious modifications under human training, or even under certain peculiar changes of natural condition. It is to this range of animal expression that we would now direct attention.

Take that barn-yard cock, for example, which five minutes ago was crowing defiance from the top of the paling to his rival over the way, and hear him now crowing a very different note of delight and affection to his assembled dames. In a few minutes you may hear his peculiar 'cluck, cluck,' over some tid-bit he has discovered, and to which he wishes to direct their attention; his long-suppressed guttural cry of alarm, if the mastiff happens to be prowling in the neighbourhood; or his soft blurr of courtship, when wooing the affections of some particular female. All of these notes, even to the minutest modulation, are known to the tenants of the barn-yard, which invariably interpret them in the sense they were intended. Or take the barn-yard hen, and observe the language by which she communicates with her young. By one note she collects and entices them under her wings, by another calls them to partake of some insect or grain she has discovered, by a third warns them of danger, should any bird of prey be sailing above, by a fourth calls them away to another place, or leads them home, should they have strayed to a distance. Nor are these various calls known instinctively, as is generally believed, by the young brood. We have watched the habits of the barn-fowl with the closest scrutiny, and are convinced that a knowledge of the mother's notes is, to the young, a process of acquirement; in the same manner as a human child quickly, but nevertheless by degrees, learns to comprehend tones of affection, doting, chiding, and the like. The knowledge of the lower animals is in almost every instance acquired; a process necessarily more rapid in them than in man, as they much sooner reach the limit of their growth and perfection. Animal language is most perfect and varied among such animals as are gregarious in their habits. Let the most ignorant of natural history attend for a few days to the habits of a flock of birds, a herd of oxen, horses, deer, elephants, or the like, and he will find that they make use of a variety of sounds often totally different from each other. Friendly recognition, hatred, fear, mirth, satisfaction, the discovery of food, hunger, and so on, are expressed each by a peculiar note, which is distinctly and instantly comprehended by the whole flock. And as among men, when simple sounds are insufficient, so among animals gesticulation is made use of to assist the comprehension and deepen the impression.

If, then, animals are really in possession of a vocal language, it may be asked, is that language capable of any modification, improvement, or deterioration; and have we any evidence to that effect? That animal language admits of extensive modification, we have ample proof in the history of cage and singing-birds. The natural note of the canary is clear, loud, and rather harsh; by careful training, and breeding from approved specimens, that note can be rendered clear, full, and mellow as that of the finest instrument. We have farther proof of such modification, in the fact of a young canary being made to imitate the notes of the linnet or goldfinch, just as either of these may be taught the song of the canary. The starling and blackbird may be trained to forsake their wood-notes wild, and to imitate the human whistle to perfection in many of our national melodies. Nay, the parrot, starling, raven, and even the canary, may be taught to articulate certain words and phrases with more precision and emphasis than the tyros of the elocutionist. Nor is artificial training always necessary to accomplish such modification; for we have the gay and lively mocking-bird of America producing, of his own free-will, almost every modulation, from the clear mellow tones of the wood-thrush, to the savage scream of the bald eagle. 'While thus exerting himself,' says Wilson, 'a person destitute of sight would suppose that the whole feathered tribes had assembled together on a trial of skill, each striving to produce his utmost effect, so perfect are his imitations. He many times deceives the sportsman, and sends him in search of birds that perhaps are not within miles of him, but whose notes he exactly imitates: even birds themselves are frequently imposed on by this admirable mimic, and are decoyed by the fancied calls of their mates, or dive with precipitation into the depth of thickets at the scream of what they suppose to be the sparrow-hawk. The mocking-bird loses little of the power and energy of his song by confinement. In his domesticated state, when he commences his career of song, it is impossible to stand by uninterested. He whistles for the dog—Cæsar starts up, wags his tail, and runs to meet his master; he squeaks out like a hurt chicken—and the hen hurries about with hanging wings and bristling feathers, clucking to protect her injured brood. The barking of the dog, the mewing of the cat, the creaking of a passing wheelbarrow, follow with great truth and rapidity. He repeats the tune taught him by his master, though of considerable length, fully and faithfully. He runs over the quivering of the canary, and the clear whistlings of the Virginian nightingale or redbird, with such superior execution and effect, that the mortified songsters feel their own inferiority, and become altogether silent, while he seems to triumph in their defeat by redoubling his exertions.'

As there is thus an evident capability of modification, so there must, to a certain degree, be improvement or deterioration, as surrounding circumstances are favourable or unfavourable to the development of the vocal

powers. A young canary brought up in the same room with a goldfinch and linnet, if he does not slavishly adopt the notes of either, will often be found to add them to his own natural music. The natural voice of the dog, so far as that can be ascertained from wild species of the family, is more a yelp and snarl than a bark; and yet what is more full and sonorous than the voice of the Newfoundland or mastiff? The wild horse —depending so much as it does upon the society of its kind—acquires the nicest modulations of neighing, so as to express pleasure, fear, recognition, the discovery of pasture, and so forth; while the laboured hack has scarcely, if at all, the command of its vocal organs. The voice of animals is just as evidently strengthened and increased in variety of tone by practice, as is that of the human singer or orator, and thus becomes capable of expressing a wider range of ideas. Indeed it is certain that, if animals are placed in situations where the use of their language is not required, they will in a short time lose the faculty of speech altogether. Thus, on the coral island of Juan de Nova, where dogs have been left from time to time, and where, finding abundance of food, they have multiplied prodigiously, it is asserted that the breed have entirely lost the faculty of barking. We knew an instance of a young canary, just bursting into song, which was rendered permanently dumb by being shut up in a darkened chamber, and by occasionally having a cloth thrown over its cage, that its notes might not disturb an invalid. This treatment was continued for several months; and so effectually did it destroy the clear, brilliant notes of the youngster, that he was never afterwards known to utter a note beyond a simple 'tweet, tweet' of alarm. As the human speech is affected by disease and old age, so likewise is that of the lower animals. The husky, paralytic voice of the old shepherd-dog, is a very different thing from the full-toned bark of his athletic years; formerly, its modulations could give expression to joy, fear, anger, reproach, and the like; now, its monotony is destitute of all meaning. We were once in possession of a starling, which we had taught to utter a number of phrases, and to whistle in perfection a couple of Scottish melodies. After a severe moulting attack, not only was his power of voice destroyed, but his memory apparently so much affected, that phrases and melodies were ever after jumbled incoherently together; much like the chattering of an old man in his dotage, or like those individuals who, after severe fevers, forget some of the languages they have acquired, or make themselves intelligible through a new jargon of English, French, and Latin phrases.

But it may be asked—if the lower animals thus make use of a vocal language, are those to whom it is addressed at all times capable of interpreting its meaning? The well-known habits of gregarious animals, in our opinion, ought to answer this question. Every individual in a herd of wild horses or deer, most perfectly understands every gesture and sound of the watch or leader, which is stationed for the general safety. Nor is such understanding altogether instinctive, but a process of training and tuition quite analogous to what takes place in our own case. Farther, the speech, if we may so call it, of one animal is not only understood by the animals of its own class, but in a great measure by the other animals that are in the habit of frequenting the same localities. Thus the chaffinch, which discovers the sparrow-hawk sailing above, instantly utters a note of alarm—a note known not only to other chaffinches, but understood and acted upon by all others of the feathered race within hearing. The suspension of every song, the rustling into the thicket beneath, the sly cowering into the first recess, or the clamour of impotent rage, abundantly attests how well they have interpreted the original note of alarm. But if all other evidence were wanting of the capacity of the lower animals to interpret other voices than their own, the fact that many of them learn to interpret human words, and to distinguish human voices, would be sufficient attestation. Thus the young horse taken from the hills, learns in a few months to discriminate the words spoken to him by his driver; and so do the ox, the dog, and other domesticated animals. This comprehension of vocal sounds evidently implies a sense of language—a sense that, on their part also, the expression of certain sounds will meet with a certain interpretation.

Such is the language of the lower animals: limited, no doubt, when compared with that of the human race; yet all-sufficient for their wants, and only inferior because not combined with that higher intelligence which, after all, forms the true distinction between man and his fellows of the animal creation.

BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES.

MURILLO.

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, the eminent Spanish painter, was born at Seville on the 1st of January 1618. His genius was displayed at a very early age, for little Bartolomé was in the habit of blackening the white-washed walls of the rooms in his father's house with his sketches, and scratching figures on the brick floors. It was the wish of his parents that he should be educated for the church; but the boy evinced so strong a predilection for the art in which he afterwards so brilliantly distinguished himself, that they at length yielded to his intreaties, and placed him with his uncle, Juan del Castillo, a painter of some repute, especially in the art of colouring.

The subjects in which Castillo excelled were fairs and markets, which afford such varied materials for picturesque groups. Murillo painted several pictures in that style, and his preceptor took great delight in encouraging him. The result was, that in a few years the disciple had learned almost as much as his master was able to teach.

At this epoch, Castillo having suddenly broken up his school, and quitted Seville to reside at Cadiz, Murillo was thrown upon his own resources, and, instead of entering any of the other schools which had rivalled Castillo's academy, he followed the impulse of his genius, and struck out a path for himself. Collecting the implements of his art, he hastened to the fair, which was then being held at Seville. It was the custom for very inferior artists to post themselves in the fair, and execute orders on the spot, for portraits of saints and martyrs, and other devotional subjects, for the adornment of dwellings, or to be exported to the then extensive Spanish colonies. Murillo, though he must have been aware of his own superiority to the class by whom he was surrounded, did not hesitate to become a candidate for employment, and performed cheerfully whatever work was offered to him, without bargaining as to price. This apparently disadvantageous commencement was perhaps one of the main causes of his subsequent success, inasmuch as he was obliged to work so rapidly, and his subjects were so varied, that he at once attained a remarkable freedom of touch and readiness of expression.

When Murillo was in his twenty-third year, one of his brother pupils at Juan del Castillo's, named Pedro de Moya, and of whom he had lost sight for several years, returned to Seville from Flanders, where he had enjoyed the advantage of studying his art under the celebrated Vandyck. The progress made by his former companion, as evinced by the specimens he displayed, stimulated Murillo to endeavour to avail himself of similar opportunities of improvement; but his resources were insufficient to defray the cost of foreign travel. Seville did not supply a field for increasing his means; but the idea struck him, that he might profitably dispose of the productions of his pencil to the masters of vessels trading from Cadiz to South America. Accordingly, he purchased a large piece of canvas, and having been well-grounded by his master, Juan del Castillo, in the method of preparing or priming it, he performed that

operation himself—thereby economising much—and then, cutting it into unequal parts, he painted upon the greater portion of them Scriptural subjects, and portraits of saints, and on the remainder landscapes, animals, and flowers. He then hastened to Cadiz, where he found no difficulty in disposing of his pictures; and returning to Seville with their product in his purse, he remained there only a sufficient time to acquaint his brother with his intention to travel, and then wended his way on foot, with an anxious, yet hopeful heart, towards Madrid. He was now twenty-four years of age.

On his arrival at the Spanish metropolis, he introduced himself to Velasquez, chief painter to Philip IV., who was highly esteemed not only at court, but universally, as an artist of transcendent merit, and a good and high-minded man. Velasquez received Murillo with the kindness which was natural to him; and having heard his simple history, he entered warmly into his feelings, and insisted that he should become his guest. In the palace, galleries, and collections of Madrid, and at the Escurial, Murillo beheld, for the first time, some of the most celebrated works of the great Italian and other masters: the delight of the young artist may be easily conceived. His generous patron, Velasquez, obtained for him every facility for copying those valuable models; and during the three years of his residence in Madrid, he manifested his great artistical powers. Velasquez watched the remarkable progress of the youth with the greatest interest, and brought under the king's notice copies made by the latter from three pictures—one by Vandyck, another by Rubens, and a third by himself. They were greatly admired by the sovereign and his court; and Velasquez strongly recommended Murillo to go to Rome, proposing not only to give him letters of introduction to eminent individuals in that city, but offering him the pecuniary means of accomplishing the journey, and of residing at Rome commodiously. These generous proposals were, however, declined; no doubt Murillo felt unwilling farther to avail himself of the bounty of Velasquez, and, impressed with gratitude for the invaluable protection and friendship of his disinterested patron, he took an affectionate leave of him, and returned to Seville.

Among other reasons which it has been supposed weighed with Murillo in producing this fixed resolution to return to his native city, without fulfilling his original intention of visiting Italy and other countries, there is one which appears to have been very natural; namely, that, having had access in Madrid to a number of the works of the first masters of every school, and having enjoyed the advantage of studying and copying them under the eye and with the advice of Velasquez, he felt that the object of his departure from Seville had been attained, and was drawn towards the place of his birth by the desire to enrich it with the productions of his genius.

The first employment he obtained after his arrival at Seville, was to paint eleven historical pictures for the *claustro-chico*, or smaller cloister of the Franciscan convent. He was not, however, engaged by the friars to paint those pictures because they considered him to be superior to the other artists resident in Seville, but, on the contrary, in consequence of the backwardness of those painters to accept the very moderate sum at the disposal of the community. Murillo being applied to as an artist of inferior grade, consented to paint the pictures on the proffered terms. They were so admirably executed, that they became the theme of universal praise. The author's fame soon eclipsed that of all the other painters in Seville, and he was overwhelmed with orders for pictures.

This was indeed a triumph; nor did his good fortune stop here. Having occasion to undertake a journey to a small place at a short distance from Seville, called Pilas, the birthplace of his mother, from whom he had inherited some little property, he there saw Donna Biatriz de Cabrera y Sotomayor, a lady of great beauty, and not only gifted with superior qualities of mind and disposition, but possessing a considerable fortune. Murillo became enamoured of this lady; but his diffidence, which was exceeded only by his merit, restrained him from aspiring to an alliance with one whose rank in life was so superior to his own. It is related, however, that, having been requested to paint an altar-piece for the church of San Geronimo at Pilas, he made so exact and beautiful a portrait of Donna Biatriz, in the countenance of an angel, that the lady, on being informed thereof, bestowed her affections on the painter, who had thus proved his attachment to her; and they were shortly afterwards married. This happy event was but the prelude to the astonishing success which attended Murillo's future career. Seville became adorned with the productions of his pencil; and it is worthy of record, that the highest price he received for any picture was 15,975 reals, or about L.160, for the justly celebrated picture of the miracle of the loaves and fishes, painted for the hospital of La Caridad at Seville; whilst for an almost equally prized painting, formerly in the Franciscan monastery, he was only paid 2500 reals, or L.25. For the great picture of San Antonio de Padua, for the baptismal altar of the cathedral of Seville, he received 10,000 reals, or L.100 sterling.

Eleven years after his return to Seville—that is to say, in 1658—Murillo formed the project of establishing an academy of painting in his native city. He met with much opposition from Herrera, and other artists, who had studied in Italy, and who were unwilling to support an artist who had never quitted Spain, as the founder of a school of painting. But his genius and perseverance vanquished every obstacle, and on the 1st of January 1660 the academy was opened, Murillo being its first president, though, with the modesty and generosity by which he was ever distinguished, he placed the name of Herrera—who had yielded to the force of his reasonings—at the head of the list of the members of the academy.

Murillo's fame may be considered to have reached its height between the years 1670 and 1680, during which period he painted his celebrated pictures of the prodigal son; our Saviour miraculously feeding the five thousand, in which there are a great number of figures in a variety of groups and attitudes, and which is remarkable for the beauty and mellowness of the colouring; Moses striking the rock; and St Thomas distributing alms to the poor. Murillo is said to have preferred the latter to all his other works. His grand picture of Moses striking the rock, displays, with great power, the varied sensations of the multitude. Some are full of anxiety for the fulfilment of the hoped-for miracle, crowds of Israelites are seen rushing towards the rock in order to assuage their thirst, whilst the exercise of Divine power is conspicuously manifested in the flow of water from the rock.

It was about this period, too, that he painted for the Hospital de la Caridad, at Seville, the admirable picture of Santa Isabel, queen of Portugal, visiting the sick and infirm poor: it is now in the collection of the Royal Academy of San Fernando at Madrid. Nothing can be more touching than this picture. The eye rests with delight upon the figure of the pious and youthful queen, who is personally performing the charitable office of attending to a youth afflicted with the loathsome distemper called a scald-head. Her beautiful countenance seems illumined by the most tender and benevolent emotions, whilst with gentle care she squeezes some water upon the boy's head from a sponge which she holds in her hand. One of her ladies holds a silver basin, in which the water is contained, whilst the mother of the youth looks up with anxiety, mingled with confidence and gratitude, towards the benevolent princess. There are several other figures in the picture, all in harmony with a subject wherein human suffering appears to be softened and allayed by the presence, tenderness, and practical Christian charity of the royal visitant. This beautiful composition rivets

the attention of the beholder, and leaves a lasting impression on the mind.

But our limits will not admit of an attempt to enumerate the works of this celebrated and truly original Spanish painter. His Scriptural pieces, which he painted in great numbers, are universally and justly admired; they are to be found in the best collections both in Spain and other countries. Notwithstanding the vicissitudes which Spain has undergone, and the number of valuable paintings of all the masters which were abstracted from that country in various ways in the course of the wars by which it has unhappily been afflicted, the far greater proportion of Murillo's pictures still adorn the public galleries, churches, and private collections of his native country.

Murillo was commissioned by Philip IV., king of Spain, to paint several historical subjects: those pictures were highly esteemed; and having been afterwards sent to Rome as presents from his majesty to the pope, the Italians were so much struck with their excellence, that they gave Murillo the title of the second Paul Veronese. The altar-pieces of many of the convents and churches of Madrid, Seville, Cordova, Granada, and Cadiz, were painted by Murillo; and even some of those of Flanders were sent thither from Spain. His portraits and landscapes are also excellent. Although Murillo was so highly distinguished as a painter of Scriptural and historical subjects, his talent in another branch of the art was extraordinary, and peculiar to himself, and has justly added to his celebrity. His portraits and groups of Spanish peasant and beggar boys, drawn after nature in a variety of attitudes and actions, such as playing at games, &c. are so truly characteristic, that all who have visited Spain, down to the present day, are struck with their identity. A gentleman who had resided some years in the peninsula, on visiting a gallery where there was one of these groups by Murillo, exclaimed to a friend by whom he was accompanied when the picture caught his eye, 'I have seen those boys, those very boys, in Spain!' So true to life and nature was Murillo.

Numerous copies of his pictures have been disposed of to foreigners as originals, though many of the latter are to be found in private and other collections in England, France, and other countries. In the National Gallery in London there are three of Murillo's paintings —a holy family; St John, when a child; and a Spanish peasant boy. They are well worthy of contemplation.

Murillo's disposition—which was characterised by gentleness, benevolence, and all the attributes of a sincere and practical Christian — exercised no doubt a great and softening influence over his choice of subjects for the exercise of the art in which he gained such high renown; and it is worthy of record, that such was the elasticity of his virtuous mind, that instead of being vain of the praises he received, they only stimulated him to increase his efforts to attain perfection. Even when compared with the great Italian masters, this eminent Spanish painter stands unsurpassed. He was peculiarly happy in drawing women and children. His style is graceful, the composition of his pictures well-studied, the attitudes of his figures varied and correct, their expression natural and attractive, the draperies elegant. All the subjects he made choice of, though brought forward with great skill, have a character of beautiful simplicity. His colouring is soft and harmonious, uniting the brilliancy of the Flemish with the correctness of the Venetian school; and the more his paintings are studied, the more conspicuous does their merit become.

Towards the close of the year 1681, Murillo, whilst painting an altar-piece for the chapel of the Capuchin convent at Cadiz, fell from the scaffolding, and was so seriously hurt, that he was obliged to return to Seville, where, after intense suffering, he breathed his last on the 3d of April 1682, in the arms of his friend and pupil, Don Pedro Nunez de Villavicencio. His wife had died about twelve years previously, and beyond the fortune she brought him, his property was small. He bequeathed the whole to his sons.

Among the pictures enumerated in his will, there was a portrait of himself when about thirty years of age, which was also the period when his marriage took place. It conveys a most pleasing impression of the amiable and gifted characteristics of the original.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

DROMIO PUBLICATIONS.

The withering ridicule bestowed by Horace upon literary imitators in his one emphatic appellative, 'servile herd,' has been repeated times without number, and the veriest tyro is now aware that theirs is, of all the sins of composition, the greatest. But since Horace's time, an entirely new kind of literary imitation has come upon the field, one in which publishers are primarily, and in general authors only secondarily, concerned. It consists in the presentment of works in direct imitation of others which, whether from their originality and merit, or from their aptly subserving some public need, have met with success. The writings of Swift and Pope tell us of a branch of 'the trade' devoted to this business early in the last century, with Edward Curl for its most eminent professor. But it has, in our time, reached a magnitude, compared with which its early history is as mewling infancy to a Hercules's manhood. It is now absolutely impossible for the slightest originality to be shown in any of the forms of paper and print, but it is immediately run upon by scores of the bibliopolic pecus, and tossed and gored into a thousand deformations.

There is a vast number of grades in this imitative power—altogether apart, it must be understood, from respectable efforts in the line of fair competition—from him who can get up a similative novel or periodical, down to the poor serf who limits his efforts to the counterfeiting of a clever book-cover. It is, however, all one thing in its ultimate character—an effort to come in for a share of the benefits which some wits of a happier kind are supposed to derive from their originality. One cannot but be somewhat amused in contemplating the proceedings of these dullards. Their private ratiocinations are of course simple enough: 'There are Smart and Spritely—understood to make a capital thing by that magazine of theirs; can't we get up something of the same kind, and take a share of their profits?' Here is the real principle of action; but of course the public must be told something else. A prospectus accordingly deplores the absence of a certain desirable character in all existing periodicals. They are too utilitarian, and do not address themselves sufficiently to the feelings; or perhaps they are too sentimental, and do not condescend sufficiently to the affairs of common life. Anything will do that may serve to mask the real object—that of draining away a portion of the patronage bestowed upon Smart and Spritely. Sometimes even a tone of censure is assumed towards the parent works. They are misleading guides: much need has the poor public to be rescued from them. Here is the pure and clean tuber at last! An instance could actually be shown of this kind of swagger being assumed, where the extreme meanness had been descended to of stealing part of the name, as well as imitating the form, of the work rivalled. What an odd idea—pretending to a superior virtue over the publication for which it was willing to be mistaken! But such is the nature of the herd in general. Capable of the sneakery of a direct imitation, they seem to be capable of any inconsistency in working it out. Hence all the progeny of successful works are more or less parricidal in their tone. The parent is astonished to find twenty images of himself putting on a hostile frown against him, and that faults and failings in his character, which the world never could see, are at length detected and exposed by his own children.

To achieve an end with that unfortunate polypoid

animal, the public, is of course the real intention of these breaches of the fifth commandment. The public, to do it justice, means well, and dreams not of evil. But this just the more lays it open to be practised upon by the fraternity of imitators. The public wishes to be shaved; it has heard of a clever artist in that line near the Blue Posts; it seeks the shop according to a description it has got, and blunders into one of four exactly imitative barbers' tabernacles which have been got up by the side of the meritorious original. The public has heard of an amazingly clever cork-screw, which whips corks out of bottles as it were by magic, and it goes to provide itself with the admirable instrument: it does not get the genuine screw, but one made by a man with a similar name, and who, being a numskull, gives his wares only an appearance, but not the reality, of their pretended virtues. Again, the public is anxious to get a certain pill, in which it has been taught, from its youth up, to place reliance: it sends for a three-shillings-and-sixpence box, and is supplied with a base imitation, loudly proclaiming on its cover, 'Be sure to ask for the true-blue antibilious pill, prepared by —— ——.' Thus is the public imposed upon in literature also. To every favourite work which it may desire, it has to make its way through an entangling brushwood of similative works, all pretending to be the true work in the first place; and in the second, if the first trick fail, to be better. Every now and then its attention is attracted by a prospectus which will not be overlooked; for go where the public will, there is the portentous announcement. Well, the public reads the advertisement, and (we shall suppose the thing referred to is a newspaper) not being behind the scenes in such matters, it yields a kind of credence to the tale which it is told—as to interests of its own to be advanced, and so forth. It purchases; it reads; half-recollecting all the time that there were very tolerable publications of that kind before, even to the minutest specialty of character; rather hazy, however, about the fact; always looking for the outcome of the great promise—when is the fun to begin? Why, after all, the old work was just as good, or rather better. What is the meaning of all this? Only, dear public, that a certain worthy person, who could not start an idea of his own, got up behind another man's idea, and tried all he could to oust him from the possession of his own vehicle. There is nothing else in the whole matter. But only thou, silly public that thou art, couldst never see it.

It is melancholy, too, this desperate struggle to get bread reft from each other's mouths. It is not all slavish meanness of soul. Often there is ingenuity of no inconsiderable amount expended in getting up a passable imitative work. Often wonderful sacrifices of capital and labour are made to thrust the secondary work into the saddle of its primary. It was lately stated that an imitative weekly newspaper had caused an outlay of twenty thousand pounds, the return of which was one of the remotest of contingencies. What heroisms these are in their way!—perverted, misapplied, yet still heroisms—elements in what might, associated with purer elements than acquisitiveness for self and partners, constitute great characters. One could almost weep over human nature thrown into positions so wretchedly false, and the redemption from which seems, for the present at least, so hopeless.

A PRISON PHILANTHROPIST.

Good is extinguished when it is rewarded. Even praise to a living philanthropist is to be deprecated. Yet it seems necessary, on other considerations, that publicity should be given to the proceedings of the now not unknown Thomas Wright of Manchester, who has attracted the attention of official persons connected with the jail of that town, by his unostentatious zeal in behalf of liberated culprits. A local paper describes him as a gray-haired man of sixty, the overseer of a foundry, and an elder in a dissenting congregation; a man, therefore, of humble grade and means, and yet a perfect hero of charity. It is Mr Wright's custom to attend in the prison of Manchester every Sunday evening to perform religious services with the inmates, and exhort them to reformation. He thus becomes acquainted with particular characters among them; and when their term of imprisonment expires, he endeavours, for such as he has a good opinion of, to obtain a restoration to society and to employment. The importance of this service to a penitent malefactor is of the highest consideration, as his greatest difficulty always is to re-establish that confidence without which employment is not to be expected; nor is its importance less to society, seeing that, for want of a ready access to a remunerative labour, many penitents are forced back upon their former courses. During the last five years, Mr Wright has got no fewer than seventy liberated prisoners into employment, and reconciled twenty to their friends; out of which united numbers only four have relapsed into error, and of these one is again reclaimed. What is also very striking, one of the restored men uses the means and influence he himself now possesses to befriend others on their liberation from prison, and actually has obtained employment for several of these unhappy beings—charity thus, as it were, reproducing charity. Altogether, these doings of a single right-hearted man, in the midst of a form of society which tends to make everything professional, and a source of gain, are most wonderful; and we feel bound to say, that we have seldom heard of a philanthropist at once exhibiting such enlarged views, and reducing them to so happy and useful a practice, as Thomas Wright.

A TOBACCO SPECULATOR.

A French newspaper makes the following statement: 'We learn that M. de Rothschild has arranged an affair which will insure him the monopoly of tobacco not only in France, but throughout the continent of Europe. He has for some time had agents in America to buy, by anticipation, the growth of all the plantations for a great many years to come. Thirty millions of francs have been appropriated to this vast speculation. The news has spread alarm among the capitalists who have entered into contracts with the royal tobacco manufactory, as it will soon be impossible for them to supply their tobacco at the stipulated prices.' What an unheard-of proceeding! One man, by wealth, to acquire a power of money-squeezing or taxing over every one of his fellow-creatures who is addicted to a by no means rare habit! The Dutchman and German, who live in an atmosphere of tobacco smoke; the Parisian gentleman, who could not want his cigar; the operative, to whom the short pipe is equally indispensable; the old woman, who would perish without her *tabatière;* all to become liable to a suffering in purse for the benefit of M. de Rothschild, because M. de Rothschild happens already to possess overgrown wealth. Is there not something alarming in this announcement, as if we were now to find the results of industry converted into the most serious of tyrannies? Why, at this rate, it would only require the profits of the tobacco monopoly to enable the monopolist to acquire a monopoly over sugar or tea; the profits of these united, to establish a monopoly of corn; and then we should have Mr D'Israeli's ideas of 'the Coming Man' realised with a vengeance—the aliment of the human race depending on the will and pleasure of an individual, and he a member of the house of Israel! Such may not practically result, but it is theoretically possible; and, on a simply philosophical consideration, nothing could be more curious. The profligate monopolies granted to courtiers, in the seventeenth century, for base and selfish reasons, here recur under totally different circumstances. Here reappears a power of units over multitudes, such as existed in similar force only in the earliest state of society.

MANNER OF EXPRESSING IDEAS.

Mr Dawson of Birmingham, in delivering a lecture on Mr Bailey's *Festus*, mentions that, in a certain read-

ing society, the poem went the whole round of the members without having its leaves cut open. It was for the purpose of drawing attention to the merits of this neglected production that Mr Dawson lectured. It was a book, he said, only for the initiated. All that we know of *Festus* is, that it is a long poem in an extremely mystical style, and containing many passages which strike an ordinary reader as extravagant. Yet we are willing to believe that, to a certain class of minds, able to go through with the perusal, this poem will appear to possess merit far beyond that of many more intelligible works. The remark we would make, however, is this: how unfortunate, if this be a true and great poem, that it should not be appreciable by a greater number of the author's fellow-countrymen! What a pity to present one's ideas in a style which wards off all but 'the initiated!' Is it utilitarianism to say this? Be it so; but surely also it is common sense. We feel the more concerned to express an opinion on the subject, because there is at present a tendency among young writers, in prose as well as poetry, to rush into a dark and Sibylline style, which they evidently think extremely fine, when it is only a blemish to the thoughts which they aim at expressing. It were very important, we think, at this moment, to have a just distinction laid down, in some authoritative quarter, between the respective values of the matter and the manner of writing. It forcibly appears to us that the matter is transcendently paramount. So that it be presented in terms which are clear, and not inconsistent with any of the requirements of taste, the grand end seems to us accomplished. To profess anything else is, in our view, to prefer the shadow to the substance, the *tailoring* to the *man*. The writers of the last age were sounder on this point than we: one used to say that a perfect style was like the atmosphere—the medium for seeing things correctly, but itself invisible.

THE MARQUESAS AND THE MARQUESANS.

The following description of these islands and their inhabitants may prove not an unacceptable sequel to the Adventure of Herman Melville, which appeared in our last number. The facts are derived from the published narratives of individuals who have visited Nukuheva, the largest island of the group, and the field in which the French have recently made attempts at colonisation in the Pacific.

The Marquesas were discovered, near the close of the sixteenth century, by a Spanish navigator, who named them, in honour of his patron, the Marquis Mendoça de Canete. There are thirteen islands, divided, by a channel of some breadth, into groups of eight and five; the largest having a length of twenty miles, with a circumference of about seventy. The coast is armed with promontories, which terminate in abrupt cliffs, and render the greater part of the shore inaccessible. A chain of hills, rising occasionally to a height of 3000 feet, stretches from one end of each island to the other, and the promontories are offshoots from that chain. The little valleys shut in between the ridges are of a triangular or semicircular shape, and afford the only ground capable of cultivation in the islands. There are none of them more than a mile in width at the point where they open out upon the sea, nor is any of greater length than two miles. Bays more or less convenient are found at the mouths of these valleys, some offering a safe anchorage to vessels; but many are too deep, or too much exposed to the winds.

The natives, who call themselves Kannaks, inhabit the valley plains, where they construct huts, very similar to those of the West Indian negroes, amidst the trees and plants from which they derive their support—such as the cocoa-nut tree, the banana, the sweet potato, and the bread-tree. The last of these furnishes their principal food. Oranges, citrons, sugar canes, and guava-trees, grow wild on the mountain flanks; and the soil also produces the cotton plant, the grape, nuts (the fruit of which contains an irritating oil), and a peculiar kind of chestnut, the fruit being larger, but of a worse quality, than the European chestnut. Tobacco grows without cultivation; and numerous aromatic plants fill the air with their fragrance. The hill-sides, to the very summit, are covered with rose-trees, palms, and ferns as large as shrubs. In consequence of the summer heats, vegetation is apt to become scorched, and this circumstance prevents the rearing of flocks. Cattle, goats, and swine, are found in a wild state; but for want of pasturage, they do not increase very rapidly, although the natives are not in the habit of hunting them. In their endeavour to colonise these islands, the French have met with considerable difficulty; and in an agricultural point of view, there does not seem much temptation to pursue their labours. Not a twentieth part of the surface can be brought into cultivation. Moreover, the spots which are capable of tillage are small detached pieces, having no means of internal communication, so that the only method of going from one to another is by sea.

The inhabitants construct their huts of the yellow bamboo, tastefully twisted together in a kind of wicker-work, and thatch them with the long tapering leaves of the palmetto. These huts are placed upon a stratum of stones, elevated a few feet above the ground, and are scattered about the valley without regard to regularity, generally under the shady branches of some lofty cocoa. Their shape is a parallelogram. The partitions which serve for walls are only three feet high, supporting a roof which rises to a height of ten feet. The door is almost always open; and the doorway is so low, as to render it necessary to stoop in order to enter. Each hut usually contains two or three families, with the exception of the royal residence, which the king's family alone inhabits. This cabin is constructed with more care, and is of larger size, than the others: it is here that the king receives the principal men of his dominions. Every one of the Marquesan islands has its king, whose authority extends over all the other chiefs of the island. These latter only rule in the bay where they live, and their power is entirely circumscribed by the limits of the valley. Indeed each valley may be regarded as containing a separate and independent community, who are in perpetual enmity with the inhabitants of the other bays. The authority of the ruling powers is firmly settled; and although living in familiar intercourse with those under them, their persons receive all the respect due to their stations. They are endowed with arbitrary power; but there is no instance of their prerogative being abused. Their subjects are bound to supply all their wants—no heavy task, under a climate so fair and fertile. The royal authority passes by hereditary descent from male to male.

The principal food of the Kannaks consists of the fermented fruit of the bread-tree, and the preparation of *poee-poee*, as they term it, forms their chief employment. A pit, five or six feet deep, is dug in the ground, the bottom being roughly paved, and the sides covered with dry herbs. The fruit is then stripped of its rind with the aid of the sharp edge of a shell, and it is pierced through and through with a splinter of wood, in order to forward the process of fermentation. The pit is filled about five-sixths with fruit thus treated, and the whole is covered up with herbs and large stones. At the end of five or six months, the mass becomes changed to a thick yellowish paste, exhaling a strong smell of leaven, in which state it is called *mâ*. The farther fermentation has proceeded, the more excellent the poee-poee is rendered; and it is asserted that in some pits there is mâ that has been there fifty years. The fermented matter is taken from the pit as it is required for use. A small portion is added to fresh fruit, and the mixture is baked in an oven, which is nothing more than a hole in the ground, in which fire is placed. Their method of cooking is to bruise the fresh fruit, add a portion of mâ, and mix the two in a trough made out of the hollowed trunk of a tree.

The whole is beaten with a stone pestle into a homogeneous paste. This is the Kannak delicacy called poee-poee. The paste has only to be tempered with a little water in a calabash, and the food is ready for use, the superfluous water being drunk at intervals during the repast. The poee-poee forms a nutritious diet, somewhat tart, but not disagreeable, even to European taste. The native mode of eating it is curious, and requires considerable dexterity of hand. Dipping the forefinger of the right hand into the dish, and giving it a rapid twirl, they draw it out thickly coated with the preparation, and then, with a second peculiar flourish, they convey it to the mouth without spilling a single drop. The awkwardness of Europeans, when attempting to eat poee-poee in this fashion, generally convulses the natives with uncontrollable laughter. This preparation is usually the only dish at their meals; but sometimes, when they have for once laid aside their characteristic indolence, they have the addition of pork or fish. Roasting is the sole method of cooking with which they are acquainted, for they have no vessel capable of bearing the action of fire. Fish are, for the most part, eaten without any dressing, and are considered in this way as a luxury.

A fermented liquor called *kava*, made from the root of a plant bearing the same name, is used in all the islands. The root is chewed in the mouth so as to extract the juice, and then spit out into a calabash. This is allowed to stand until fermentation takes place. The liquor possesses the combined properties of an acid and a narcotic. The men drink it to such an excess, that they are in a state of almost perpetual inebriety; yet alcoholic liquors introduced by foreigners are always preferred. The people are fond of tobacco, but being too idle to cultivate the plant in their own country, they receive their supplies from whalers. They are accustomed to form a smoking party in one of their huts: the pipe is passed from mouth to mouth, as no one inhales the smoke more than three or four times at once. The Kannaks fish with hooks and with nets by torchlight: they have also a third plan of taking fish, which succeeds very well. They go at flow of tide to the rocks, where they know that the finny tribe are plentiful. Whilst some hold a net stretched out under water, others plunge into the sea, and drive the fish towards the net. The pursuers then seize them, and ordinarily bring three fish to shore, one in each hand, and one in the mouth. To take bonitoes and flying-fish, they simply fashion a bit of mother-of-pearl into a hook. The fish snap at the unbaited hook, being doubtless deceived by its colour.

In general, the Marquesans are tall and well-made; but their strength by no means corresponds with their fine figures. This is owing to their diet being almost entirely vegetable, and to their abstaining from exercise. Their physiognomy is between that of the negro and that of the European. They are all—men, women, and children—excellent swimmers. They throw themselves fearlessly into the water several times a-day, and although in a state of perspiration, they suffer no harm. They are also dexterous climbers of trees, making the ascent like monkeys, with the hands and feet only. The men wear a girdle of *tapa*, a species of stuff made from the inner bark of the mulberry tree; this girdle is sufficiently long to pass twice round the body. To a similar vestment the women add another piece of tapa, with which they drape themselves not unfrequently in a graceful manner. The transition from barbarism to civilisation is always ludicrous. In those bays where Europeans have obtained a footing, the Kannaks array themselves in the cast-off clothing of their visitors; but when they retire inland, they resume the garment to which they are most accustomed. The men go bareheaded, and wear the hair cut in many odd fashions. Some have merely a tuft on the top of the head; others have two tufts, one on each side: some cut the hair on one side only; others do not cut it at all, but collect it behind, and bind it together. Tattooing is universally practised: it is made to extend over the whole body; and the gradations of rank are marked by its presence, the great men having their figures nearly black with it. Very often the tattooing of one side corresponds with the other: fishes and other objects are curiously mingled with straight lines and curves. When the women are tattooed, which rarely happens, it is only on their limbs and lips. Both men and women wear rudely-carved boar or sperm-whale tusks in their ears by way of ornament.

The life led by the Marquesans is usually quiet and monotonous. To dissipate the ennui inseparable from their indolence, they sometimes assemble and form a circle in a squatting position. They then strike their hands against one another, drawling out at the same time certain monotonous airs, which call to mind the vespers for the dead in Catholic countries. Their songs are nothing more than bare narrations of some important event or piece of news. On all great occasions they have festivals termed *coïnas*. In these they dance violently to music on flutes and tambours, the only instruments they possess. The flute is a bamboo with an opening near the closed end. They place the opening under one nostril, and having closed the other, they produce a single note by blowing into the cane. Their tambour is made of the hollowed trunk of a cocoa-nut tree, over the two ends of which the skin of a shark is spread. It would be difficult to imagine that anything very melodious could be drawn from these uncouth instruments. A coïna is always held whenever a victory has been gained. It is then that the horrible ceremony of eating the flesh of their prisoners takes place, the savage orgies being celebrated by the light of fires at night, in the midst of songs and dances.

The people in the different bays are almost always at war with one another. Their hostile expeditions are usually made in the night: then it is that an invading party advances in silence, and endeavours to surprise the inhabitants of a neighbouring bay. All who resist are slain; but everything that can be carried away is removed, including men, women, and children. These excursions are often undertaken without any previous provocation, and solely with a view to procure human flesh wherewith to celebrate a coïna. When an attack is made in open day, and there is no attempt to surprise, the two parties utter ferocious cries as they advance. On these occasions they make little use of their bludgeons, their weapons being chiefly firearms, procured from the crews of English or American whalers. The following is Mr Herman Melville's description of a warrior chief in his native costume:—'His aspect was imposing. The splendid long drooping tail-feathers of the tropical bird, thickly interspersed with the gaudy plumage of the cock, were disposed in an immense upright semicircle upon his head—their lower extremities being fixed in a crescent of guinea-beads, which spanned the forehead. Around his neck were several enormous necklaces of boar-tusks, polished like ivory, and disposed in such a manner, as that the longest and largest were upon his capacious chest. Thrust forward through the large apertures in his ears were two small and finely-shaped sperm-whale teeth, presenting their cavities in front, stuffed with freshly-plucked leaves, and curiously wrought at the other end into strange little images and devices. These barbaric trinkets, garnished in this manner at their open extremities, and tapering and curving round to a point behind the ear, resembled not a little a pair of cornucopias. The loins of the warrior were girt about with heavy folds of a dark-coloured tapa, hanging before and behind in clusters of braided tassels; while anklets and bracelets of curling human hair completed his unique costume. In his right hand he grasped a beautifully-carved paddle-spear, nearly fifteen feet in length, made of the bright koar-wood, one end sharply pointed, and the other flattened like an oar-blade. Hanging obliquely from his girdle by a loop of sinnate was a richly-decorated pipe: the slender reed forming its stem was coloured with a red

pigment; and round it, as well as the idol-bowl, fluttered little streamers of the thinnest tapa. But that which was most remarkable in the appearance of the splendid islander, was the elaborated tattooing displayed on every noble limb. All imaginable lines, and curves, and figures, were delineated over his whole body; and, in their grotesque variety and infinite profusion, I could only compare them to the crowded groupings of quaint patterns we sometimes see in costly pieces of lacework. The most simple and remarkable of all these ornaments was that which decorated the countenance of the chief. Two broad stripes of tattooing, diverging from the centre of his shaven crown, obliquely crossed both eyes—staining the lids—to a little below either ear, where they united with another stripe, which swept in a straight line along the lips, and formed the base of the triangle. The warrior, from the excellence of his physical proportions, might certainly have been regarded as one of nature's noblemen; and the lines drawn upon his face may possibly have denoted his exalted rank.'

The Kannaks' treatment of their sick is in the highest degree cruel and unnatural. Instead of giving assistance, every one shuns the invalid; and if he is thought to be at all in the way, he is taken to some distant spot, whither it is thought sufficient to carry him food at intervals. It is also a custom of theirs to prepare the dying man's coffin before his eyes; and, what is still more incredible, when they see him about to render up his last sigh, they place a bit of moistened tapa in his mouth, whilst the fingers of some friend are employed in closing the lips and nostrils. Death of course is the immediate consequence. This proceeding has its origin in the notions which they entertain as to the nature and future destiny of the soul. They suppose that the soul, the principle of existence, has its seat in the epigastric region, and escapes from the body along with the parting breath. They therefore believe that, by shutting the orifices through which the breath is sent, they prevent the egress of the vital principle, which remains in its place, and continues to live, until the body has entirely wasted away. During the period of decomposition, another body is in process of creation in a far-distant island, where all the good things of this life are found in abundance, and the soul flies thither as soon as its old habitation is completely destroyed. If death were allowed to steal upon its victim in the natural way, the soul would escape from its receptacle, wander into empty space, and die of inanition. Death being thus hastened, the body is anointed for several days with cocoa-nut oil, and then conveyed to a solitary hut called a *morái*, prepared expressly for it. Care is taken to place poee-poee, and whatever else the soul may require for its sustenance, in the inside of the coffin. With regard to children, however, their bodies are not carried to a morái, but are deposited in a kind of basket, which is suspended from the branches of a cocoa-nut tree especially devoted to this purpose.

Notwithstanding these and other superstitious observances, the idea of religion is but faintly developed among the Marquesans. Wooden images, rudely carved, have been occasionally seen; yet worship is but seldom, and then only coldly, offered to them. Indeed the poor images are cuffed and kicked about in the most irreverent manner, just like any other block of wood or stone that may lie in the way. A class of priests and priestesses exists, it is true, ranking next the royal personages; but their functions have nothing at all to do with the observances of religion. They are occupied in publishing the commands of the king, in presiding at the great festivals, and in imposing the *taboo*; which last operation consists in declaring that certain persons, things, or places, are sacred, and thenceforth it is unlawful to touch the persons and things, or to place the foot in those places. The high priests also undertake to foretell events, and are frequently consulted previous to a battle.

Their division of the seasons is simply into wet and dry, and indeed any exacter partition would not be very easy. The moon is watched to indicate the lapse of time; and the bread-fruit tree enables them to calculate roughly the period of a year, since about three crops of fruit are equal to thirteen lunar months. As for the reckoning of past time, the epochs by which they date are irregular and uncertain. They calculate by generations—a mode only adopted by certain families who pretend to a greater antiquity than the rest, and by the royal house. In these families a sacred cord is preserved, to which a knot is added whenever the head of one of them dies.

The language is described as very poor. The alphabet includes only fourteen of our letters; but there are others which it is impossible to express exactly in English.

FATHER BLACKHALL'S SERVICES.

FIRST ARTICLE.

'A Brief Narrative of the Services Performed to Three Noble Ladies, by Gilbert Blackhall,' is one of the books printed by the Spalding Club in Aberdeen. It affords some curious peeps into the state of society in the north of Scotland in the first half of the seventeenth century, especially those families by whom the Catholic faith was still adhered to. The reverend father is an arrant gossip. He is curious in the everyday pursuits, the tempers, the occupations, nay, the clothing and feeding, of those with whom he was concerned. Moreover, he was an ill-requited man. He had the highest possible opinion of his own merits and exertions; but he did not find other people ready to acknowledge his claims; hence he set them forth, with all due precision and minuteness, in a narrative which fills a considerable quarto volume. Had he not been a weak-minded man, occupying himself in trifles, he probably had gained a great reputation by some folio volume, written in Latin, against Luther and John Knox, but we would not have had the curious pictures of national customs and grotesque incidents with which his garrulous narrative supplies us. The first person to whom we find Father Blackhall performing his services is the Lady Isabel Hay, daughter of the Earl of Errol. This lady, after her mother's death, went to France in 1630. A certain Mr James Forbes was her father's friend and correspondent in France, and she was, as merchants say, 'consigned to him.' He appointed Blackhall her confessor; 'which he did repent thereafter,' as Blackhall says; and indeed the chief purport of the narrative is to describe the efforts which her spiritual adviser made to protect her from the unseasonable addresses of Mr Forbes. There is much curious matter in this part of the father's narrative; but we must pass from it to another portion of his adventures, in which we think the reader will probably be more interested.

At the conclusion of his engagement with Lady Isabel, he received an application from the Lady Frendraught, celebrated for the suspicion under which she fell, a few years before, of having set fire to her house, in order to burn Lord Aboyne in it.* The horror of this event appears to have deterred the reverend father from such a connexion. He says—'My Lady of Frendraught did send to me, praying me to come to her, for the *frère* she had before was lately departed from this life. I refused absolutely to see her, because she was suspected to be guilty of the death of my lord of Aboyne, who, seven years before, was burned in the castle of Frendraught: whether she be guilty or not, God knoweth, for that hath not been yet discovered.' Fate determined that, instead of the suspected murderess, he should ally himself with the Dowager Lady Aboyne, the widow of the victim; and he entered the service of 'this truly noble and religious lady' about the middle of July

* See an account of this strange tragedy in former series of the Journal, vol. iv., 101 (No. 109).

1638. Though the Roman Catholics were a proscribed body through Scotland generally, the Marquis of Huntly, and some other Catholic lords in the north, possessed a considerable extent of feudal power for the protection of themselves and their adherents; and such a person as Blackhall, if not absolutely secure, would be removed from many causes of apprehension by such an alliance. In addition to their claims on the respect of the people as their spiritual advisers, these priests could found on the dangers and hardships they were perpetually liable to; and as they were execrated and hunted beyond their own community, they seem to have obtained the greater privileges, immunities, and benisons within it. In his new appointment, the reverend father loses none of that spirit of inquiry and interference regarding small matters for which he has already appeared so conspicuous. We find him thus describing his position in the household, and the order he thought fit to take concerning it. 'I did eat in my chamber as they who were before me used to do: four dishes of meat was the least that was sent to me at every meal, with ale and wine conforming; which I thought superfluous; but knowing the noble disposition of the lady, who gave the order herself for all the tables, as well of her servants as her own, I would not so soon utter my mind, until I should know better how my admonitions would be received. I asked my man what was done with the relics of my table. He answered me boldly that he sold them, and said the relics of priests were due unto their men. When I did hire you, said I, did I promise you such casualties? No, sir, said he; but it is the custom of this house, as all the servants will bear witness. They are fools, said I, and not capable to bear witness who give testimony to their own prejudice. What prejudice is that to thee? said he. My lady doth bestow the meat upon you, and asketh no count of it back again; so what you leave, I think should be for me rather than for any other body. If I did buy the meat myself, said I, was I bound to give you all that rested over my own sufficance, so that I could not bestow it in any other way after you had got your sufficance of it? No, said he; you might dispose of it at your own pleasure, and so doth my lady, who wills your man [to] get what you leave. No, said I; my lady wills, and I likewise, that thou carry to the kitchen all that I leave, both meat, bread, and drink, that all may serve the common table; and go thou to it, and there take your part of all, as the others do. And if thou determine anything another way, thou shalt not serve me one hour longer. I told my lady afterwards this dialogue which passed between my man and me, whereat she did laugh well; and this did acquire me the affections of the servants, who grudged, but could not mend it; for they knew that my lady would not take notice of such base things, much less correct them.'

The people in the neighbourhood seem not to have been in general Roman Catholics; for the father complains much of their importunate curiosity, saying that 'if he but opened the window, they ran to see him, as some monstrous thing;' and one woman declared she hoped to wash her hands in his heart's blood. Aboyne castle stands near the village of Charlestown of Aboyne, close to the river Dee, and thirty miles from its mouth at Aberdeen. Eastward, descend fine sweeps of arable land towards the coast, while to the west begins the great Highland range of the Grampians. There, in the close vicinity of their strongholds, the lands of Aboyne were subject to perpetual depredations by the Highland reivers of the day. The lonely widow appears to have had but a scanty retinue for so wild a neighbourhood, and we find her obliged to add to the accomplished Blackhall's titles of priest and chamberlain, that of captain of her castle. He describes the manner in which he repelled one of these invasions; and it is clear that his own prowess on the occasion has not been neglected by the historian. When a visitation by friends was of the following character, the nature of an inroad from neutrals or enemies may be anticipated:—

'The very first that obliged us to make use of our arms were the Marquis of Huntly's* own men of Badenoch. They had been at Aberdeen getting arms, some forty or thereabout, with their officer, Thomas Gordon, a proud and saucy rascal. They, coming up the north side of the water of Dee, came to Aboyne, and presented themselves upon the Peat Hill; and Thomas Gordon, leaving the rest there, did come with three others to the gate, which I made to be kept fast. I sent Thomas Cordoner, the porter, to the gate to ask what they desired. Thomas the officer answered boldly that they would lodge in the house, because they were my lord's men, and the house was also his; and that the night before they had lodged in the place of Drum; which I knew to be false, for the laird of Drum was not a man to lodge such rascals in his house. When the porter told me this so insolent answer, I did go to the gate; for I had the key in my pocket, and did not give it to the porter, fearing that he might be so simple as to let them in, and we should have had more pain to put them out than to hold them out. I did take with me six good fellows, every one with his sword at his side and a light gun in his hand, and placed them all on one side of the alley that goes from the outer gate, betwixt two walls to the court, every one three or four spaces from another, and made them turn their faces and the mouths of their guns a slanting way, not right to the port, nor to the wall over against them, but a middle way betwixt them both, that they might see both at once. * *

'When I had placed them thus, and encouraged them, I did go to the gate with a bended pistol in my hand; and before I did open the wicket, I told them to retire themselves, all but one, to speak to me: they did so. Thomas Gordon only stayed; the rest were retired only the matter of ten paces, ready to rush in if he could have thrusted up the wicket fully. Then I did open it a little, so that he might see my soldiers in the alley. Before he did see them, I asked them what they did come here to seek? He very confidently said, We will see my lady, who we know will give us money, and lodge us; and with that was pressing in his shoulder; and I, seeing his impudence, said, As you love your life, stir not to win in, otherwise I will discharge my pistol in your heart; and you shall not see my lady, nor get anything from her, unless it be meat and drink without the gate; but none of you shall come within it, and go out again living. Sir, said he, we are my lord's men, and this house is his, and why may we not lodge in it? Have you an order from my lord, says I, to lodge here? Let me see his order. Sir, it is my lord's will that we lodge in his land. Then go seek his land, and lodge in it; for he hath no land nor house here so long as my lady liveth; but if my lord were dwelling here himself, durst you present yourselves to his gate to lodge with him? No, said he, we must respect my lord. You base fellow, said I, should not ladies be respected as much as lords, and more. But you have not so much honesty as to respect anybody. But put in your head, and see how we are prepared to receive you; and tell your neighbours that you shall get no other money here than that which shall come out of these guns, nor lodging, unless it be graves to bury you; and therefore retire yourself, that I may shut the gate. He retired malcontented; and my lady did send meat and drink to the foot of the Peat Hill, forbidding them to live upon her tenants, but bade them lodge in taverns, paying what they should take; otherwise, they should not go far unpunished. They did so, and went away the next day peaceably.'

The next visit was from a party of the clan Cameron, who were at first perplexed by the diplomatic skill of Blackhall, but had subsequently to yield to his warlike prowess. The marauders commenced operations by plundering a tenant's house.

'So we marched with a dozen of guns, eight pistols,

* The deceased Lord Aboyne was son to this great noble, the chief of the clan Gordon.

and my big carabine. Before we went out at the gate, I told them what order I desired to be kept, which was this: we must seek by all means to surprise them in the house plundering; and to do it, we must march as the Highlanders do, every one after another, without any words among us.'

Blackhall then gives all the necessary orders to his men as to where they were to place themselves, so as to guard both door and windows; and says, 'How soon we were in the court, I said with a loud voice, Every one to his post; which was done in the twinkling of an eye. Then I went to the door, thinking to break it up with my foot; but it was a thick double door, and the lock very strong. Whilst I was at the door, one of them did come to bolt it; and I, hearing him at it, did shoot a pistol at him. He said afterwards that the ball did pass through the hair of his head: whether he said true or not, I know not. I did go from the door to the windows, and back again, still encouraging them, and praying them at the windows to hold their eyes still upon our enemies, and to kill such as would lay their hands to a weapon; and to those at the door to have their guns ever ready to discharge at such as would mean to come forth without my leave; and still I threatened to burn the house and them all in it, if they would not render themselves at my discretion; which they were loath to do, until they saw the light bundles of straw that I had kindled to throw upon the thatch of the house; although I did not intend to do it, nor burn our friends with our foes. But if Malcolm Dorward, and his wife and servants, and his son John Dorward, and John Cordoner, all of whom the Highlanders had lying in bonds by them, had been out, I would not have made any scruple to have burnt the house and all the Highlanders within it, to give a terror to others who would be so brutal as to oppress ladies who never wronged them.

'They, seeing the light of the burning straw coming in at the windows, and the keepers of the windows bidding them surrender themselves before they be burnt, called for quarter. I told them they should not get other quarter but my discretion; unto which, if they would submit themselves faithfully, they would find the better quarter; if not, be at their hazard. Thereupon I bade their captain come and speak with me all alone, with his gun under his arm, and the stock foremost; but if any did press to follow him, they should kill both him and them who should press to follow him. He did come out as I ordained, and trembled as the leaf of a tree. I believe he thought we would kill him there. I did take his gun from him, and discharged it, and laid it down upon the earth by the side of the house. Then, after I had threatened him, and reproached their ingratitude, who durst trouble my lady or her tenants, who was, and yet is, the best friend that their chief Donald Cameron hath; for, said I, he will tell you how I and another man of my lady's went to him where he was hiding himself with his cousin Ewan Cameron, in my lady's land, and brought them in croup to Aboyne, where they were kept secretly for three weeks, until their enemies the Covenanters had left off the seeking of them; and you, unthankful beast as you are, have rendered a displeasure to my lady for her goodness toward you. He pretended ignorance of that courtesy done to his chief.' Blackhall then made him swear that all that had been plundered from the tenants should be restored, and what had been consumed should be paid for; and also 'made him swear by the soul of his father that neither he, nor none whom he could hinder, should ever hereafter trouble or molest my lady or any of her tenants.' He then ordered every man separately to come out and take the same oath.

'They did all come out severally, and took the same oath as I had commanded them; and as they did come to me, I discharged their guns, to the number of six or eight-and-forty, which made the tenants convene to us from the parts where the shots were heard; so that, before they had all come out, we were nearly as many as they, armed with swords, and targets, and guns. When they had all made their oaths to me, I ranked our people like two hedges, five spaces distant from one another's rank, and but one pace every man from another in that same rank, and turned the mouths of their guns and their faces one towards another, so as the Highlanders might pass, two and two together, betwixt their ranks: they passed so from the door of the hall in which they were, to the place where their guns were lying all empty. They trembled passing, as if they had been in a fever quartan.' He and his men then saw the marauders fairly off Lady Aboyne's lands, and, returning to Aboyne, 'told my lady the event of our siege, who was very joyful that there was no blood shed on either side.'

The state of letter-writing is fully disclosed by the fact, that, in the space of eleven and a half years, Lady Aboyne had only received two letters, and these were from two of her sisters. Indeed she appears to have lived a most lonely, desolate life. At her death, all her care seems to have been that her daughter, her only child, might be brought up in the Catholic religion. For this purpose she had previously charged Blackhall with the care of her; and manfully did he redeem the pledge, as we find related in the chapter entitled 'The Good Offices done to Madame de Gordon, now Dame D'Attour to Madame; by Gilbert Blakhall, priest'—which we shall make the subject of a separate paper.

PAUPER COLONIES OF HOLLAND.

Every one must have heard something of Dutch husbandry—its formal regularity, thrift, and unparalleled tidiness. Few, however, may be acquainted with the agricultural colonies of Holland—those pauper establishments so peculiarly adapted to the genius of the country, and consequently so pregnant with advantage not only to the class for whom they are directly intended, but to the community in general. It is now upwards of twenty years since they were established, a time sufficiently ample to test their value; and we readily avail ourselves of the narrative of a recent tourist,* to convey to our readers some idea of their system and economy.

'The first place in Holland I went to visit connected with agriculture, was the agricultural colonies at Frederickscoord and Willemscoord. They were established when, after two years of great scarcity, a large proportion of the population were reduced to absolute destitution, and depended entirely for their subsistence on the charities of their more fortunate countrymen. So prevalent did the practice of begging become, that it was found necessary to do something to relieve those unfortunate men who were willing, but unable to get work. A society was therefore formed by a few benevolent individuals, the object of which was to give employment to men in this deplorable condition. In carrying out their purpose, they conferred not only an immediate and lasting benefit on the individuals in question, but effected great national advantages; first, by stemming the spread of vice, which would have been the natural consequence of such destitution; and, in the second place, by increasing the national resources, in converting to arable land a waste on which even a sprig of heather was scarcely to be met with. Such was the origin of these colonies twenty-four years ago. And no one can travel the road along which they are situated, without noticing the great change that has been effected on the face of the country by their establishment; and the change is doubly observed when we pass from the unimproved waste to the neat cottages which line the road. From a wild barren country, we enter at once a little oasis, which bears every mark of prosperity; neat cottages, betraying the Dutchman's taste in their clean appearance, crops as luxuriant as if nurtured by a better soil, and gardens stocked with useful vegetables, and adorned

* Sketches of Belgian, German, and Dutch Husbandry, in the Quarterly Journal of Agriculture for 1846. Blackwood, Edinburgh.

with a variety of flowers. Each house is placed at the road-side, in the middle of the plat belonging to it, and directly opposite to another on the other side of the road. The buildings are all in one; the part allotted to the cow and pig being built of wood, and the cottage of brick. In the cottage are two rooms: one of them is large, and answers the purpose of kitchen, dining-room, and bed-room for some of the family; the other is small, and contains only a bed at one end, and at the other a closet, which answers the purpose of a milk-house. Great attention is paid to the dung, which is put up into neat heaps at the back of the house, consisting of alternate layers of turf and manure from the byre, and watered every now and then by the liquids previously collected from all the houses in a cask sunk in the ground.

'In Willemsoord, which is the smaller of the two colonies, there are 176 such houses, all tenanted by paupers but six, whose occupiers pay rent for their farms. The quantity of land attached to each house is about seven acres imperial. The colonists are all supplied with implements on entering on their plat, besides a cow and pig. The food of the colonist is for the most part potatoes and rye-bread, with milk; little or no flesh being used. The small farmers pay L.3, 15s. a-year for their plat; but the whole produce of the colonists' land is taken to the general magazine. There is a regular creditor and debtor account kept with them from their first entering the colony. Everything they receive on entering is marked down against them; and whenever they are enabled to pay off their debts, from economy of living, they are allowed to rent their plats. Some have succeeded in this; but the instances are rare. The scheme is not to be looked at in the light of a speculation, for as such it was never intended; but it has sufficiently succeeded in the object for which it was designed; namely, the relieving of the destitute, besides the consequent advantages referred to before. Attached to these colonies are others of a penal character, to which unruly members are sent, and which are subjected to more rigorous laws than are necessary in the free colonies.

'The wages and rations allotted to them are as follows:—Suppose a family of eight individuals, husband, wife, and six children, three of whom, with their father, work, the other three go to school, while the mother remains at home. The sums set down for wages here are only imaginary, being somewhat higher than are generally allowed:—

	Per Week.
Man at 10d. a-day,	L.0 5 0
Son at 10d. a-day, and other two at 2s. 3d. each per week,	0 9 4
Wages earned for whole family per week,	L.0 14 4
From which is deducted—	
Winkel geld, L.0 5 4	
Bread, potatoes, and clothing for eight, 0 8 0	per week.
	L.0 13 4 — 0 13 4
Which is put down to their credit for future emergencies,	L.0 1 0

By winkel geld is meant money for buying little necessaries; such as coffee, tobacco, &c. The allowance of it for each person is 8d. a-week. The allowance for bread, potatoes, and clothing, is 1s. per week for each person. The only crops grown by the colonists are rye, potatoes, and grass. The farmers grow what they choose.

'There are several overseers, who superintend the work done in the colonies. Attached to them are schools for the gratuitous education of the children, and also workshops in which they are taught some useful trade. I passed one of these shops, in which there were from thirty to forty looms worked by the children; and adjoining it was another room, where some were engaged in spinning, mending shoes, and other occupations. I was attracted to the place by the busy clatter of the shuttles, and sounds of music, which proceeded from it; and on coming up to it, found them engaged at their respective occupations, cheering on one another in their work by a song in which they all joined. What health, what happiness, shone in these pauper children's faces! Their looks were a sufficient proof of the benefits derived from such an institution.'

So much for the system; now for the principles upon which it is founded. There is not a sounder maxim in political economy, than that every man should labour for his own support, and if he cannot obtain labour, that it should be furnished to him by the state; for it is certainly better that he should contribute, however little, to his own maintenance, than that he should be upheld in idle indigence. Of course the kind of labour will differ, according to the facilities of the district, as that may be maritime, manufacturing, or agricultural; but this matters little, so long as the labour is of a profitable kind. Perhaps of all species of labour, agriculture is the most universally applicable, as its object is the production of food, a commodity the demand for which never fails; and not only the production, but the increase of food, as every effort of culture is attended with a proportional fertility of the soil. In Holland, where agriculture is conducted on what may be called the garden system—that is, a careful and ceaseless attention to a comparatively small plot—such colonies are particularly appropriate. There culture is carried to such perfection, that a man, if not absolutely idle or prodigal, may thrive on his little allotment; and the state, taking this into account, puts the pauper in the way of making his own livelihood, if he chooses. If not, he is handed over to the penal colony, where compulsion is substituted for free-will.

Taking these matters into consideration, our tourist naturally puts the question, 'Is the establishment of such societies impracticable in our own country? Are there not thousands of unimproved acres, that have been condemned as useless, many of which exceed in fertility the waste in which the Dutch colonies are situated? Are there not hundreds of unemployed hands who crowd our poor-houses and pauper rolls, who frequent our roads and streets as mendicants, who haunt our lanes as degraded miscreants, advancing their poverty as a palliation of their vices and crimes? Is there not money raised to relieve the destitute? And are there not many benevolent individuals who, by the gratuitous bestowment of their charity, encourage idleness and foster vice? In Britain, truly, we have the elements for such a society, but we want some master-spirit to bring them together, and put them into operation. It is a subject that cannot be too strongly pressed upon proprietors of land, as the best way of improving the waste portions of their properties, and of reducing at the same time the burdens with which their cultivated lands are so heavily taxed.' These questions require to be answered with caution: than pauperism, there is not a more difficult question to deal with in the whole range of political economy.

Conducted as the Dutch colonies are, the system seems at once fraternal and politic. It places the individual in a position to earn his own subsistence, and to raise himself from pauperism to that of an independent rent-paying farmer. It is true that his family may increase, and by this means he may be kept in pauperism; but then, from the care which the society takes of these — in educating and training them to industrial habits — they start from a better position than their parents, unaided, could have acquired for them. To plant a poor man on a piece of land, is to do but little for him, unless he has the hope of rising, by his industry, from begging to honest independence; and this the Dutch system seems calculated to accomplish. We are by no means in favour of a mere cottage system, which may furnish a man temporarily with bread, and tempt him, as it were, to bring into existence a large family, for whom he can do almost nothing; thus increasing pauperism by increasing its numbers. But we do see much force and truth in a system which while it places a man in the way of earning his livelihood, places him also in a position from which he may

rise, by industry and economy, to something better than he was before. As long as a Dutchman holds his allotment from the society, he is but a pauper; so soon as, by his savings, he pays off their claim, he becomes a rent-paying farmer; and this rent-paying condition is one of hope and encouragement. Complicated and distracting as the subject of pauperism is, the agricultural colony system of Holland seems one at least worthy of imitation in certain districts of our own country. It is not an untried novelty, like the many schemes which are annually promulgated in Britain: twenty-four years of endurance, if not of success, is at the least no slight recommendation.

MORAL COURAGE.

[From an American Newspaper.]

Have the courage to discharge a debt while you have the money in your pocket.

Have the courage to do without that which you do not need, however much you may admire it.

Have the courage to speak your mind when it is necessary that you should do so, and to hold your tongue when it is better that you should be silent.

Have the courage to speak to a poor friend in a threadbare coat, even in the street, and when a rich one is nigh. The effort is less than many take it to be, and the act is worthy a king.

Have the courage to set down every penny you spend, and add it up weekly.

Have the courage to tell a dramatic author that his piece is unfit for presentation to a manager, when your opinion is asked concerning it.

Have the courage to admit that you have been in the wrong, and you will remove the fact from the mind of others, putting a desirable impression in the place of an unfavourable one.

Have the courage to adhere to a first resolution when you cannot change it for a better, and to abandon it at the eleventh hour upon conviction.

Have the courage to make a will, and, what is more, a *just* one.

Have the courage to face a difficulty, lest it kick you harder than you bargain for. Difficulties, like thieves, often disappear at a glance.

Have the courage to leave a convivial party at a proper hour for so doing, however great the sacrifice; and to stay away from one, upon the slightest grounds for objection, however great the temptation to go.

Have the courage to dance with ugly people, if you dance at all; and to decline dancing, if you dislike the performance, or cannot accomplish it to your satisfaction.

Have the courage to say you hate the Polka, and prefer an English song to an Italian 'piece of music' [if such be really your taste].

Have the courage to shut your eyes on the prospect of large profits, and to be content with small ones.

Have the courage to tell a man why you will not lend him your money; he will respect you more than if you tell him you can't.

Have the courage to cut the most agreeable acquaintance you possess, when he convinces you that he lacks principle. 'A friend should bear with a friend's infirmities'—not his vices.

Have the courage to wear your old garments till you can pay for new ones.

Have the courage to thrust your legs down between the sheets in cold weather; and to shave every day before breakfast.

Have the courage to pass the bottle without filling your glass, when you have reasons for so doing; and to laugh at those who urge you to the contrary.

Have the courage to wear thick boots in winter, and to insist upon your wife and daughters doing the like.

Have the courage to review your own conduct; to condemn it where you detect faults; to amend it to the best of your ability; to make good resolves for your future guidance, and to keep them.

Have the courage to decline playing at cards for money, when 'money is an object,' or to cease playing, when your losses amount to as much as you can afford to lose.

Have the courage to prefer propriety to fashion—one is but the abuse of the other.

[We beg to add another counsel which we have always regarded as of the highest importance—

Have the courage to confess ignorance whenever, or with regard to whatever subject, you really are uninformed.]

THE DEW-DROP AND THE STREAM.

[The following beautiful lines, which we find in a newspaper, are said to be the production of a servant girl from Devonshire.]

The brakes with golden flowers were crowned,
And melody was heard around—
When, near the scene, a dew-drop shed
Its lustre on a violet's head,
And trembling to the breeze it hung!
The streamlet, as it rolled along,
The beauty of the morn confessed,
And thus the sparkling pearl addressed:

'Sure, little drop, rejoice we may,
For all is beautiful and gay;
Creation wears her emerald dress,
And smiles in all her loveliness.
And with delight and pride I see
That little flower bedewed by thee—
Thy lustre with a gem might vie,
While trembling in its purple eye.'

'Ay, you may well rejoice,' 'tis true,'
Replied the radiant drop of dew—
'You will, no doubt, as on you move,
To flocks and herds a blessing prove.
But when the sun ascends on high,
Its beam will draw me towards the sky;
And I must own my little power—
I've but refreshed a humble flower.'

'Hold!' cried the stream, 'nor thus repine—
For well 'tis known a Power divine,
Subservient to His will supreme,
Has made the dew-drop and the stream.
Though small thou art (I that allow),
No mark of Heaven's contempt art thou—
Thou hast refreshed a humble flower,
And done according to thy power.'

All things that are, both great and small,
One glorious Author formed them all;
This thought may all repinings quell:
What serves his purpose, serves him well.

SELF-ENERGY.

Self-energy is the true life of a man. To think by other men's thoughts, is no true living thinking; to believe by other men's belief, is no true living faith. The mind must, by its own independent exertions, seek, and, so far as its native powers will enable it, arrive at, the *modes* and *causes* of the truth of those propositions it receives as truths, or substantially it will think and believe nothing. Substantially, neither will the propositions exist for it, nor it for them. They will be nonentities; and it will only dream of understanding them.—*Cromwell's Literary Florets.*

WHOM TO LOOK TO.

There are six sorts of people at whose hands you need not expect much kindness. The sordid and narrow-minded think of nobody but themselves; the lazy will not take the trouble to serve you; the busy have not time to think of you; the overgrown rich man is above minding any one who needs his assistance; the poor and unhappy have neither spirit nor ability; the good-natured fool, however willing, is not capable of serving you.—*Burgh.*

LIBERTY.

Liberty is to the collective body what health is to every individual body. Without health, no pleasure can be tasted by man; without liberty, no happiness can be enjoyed by society.—*Bolingbroke.*

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